

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 05473 251440Z

43

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3998

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5473

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS XF

SUBJ: MODERATION IN ISRAELI TONE TOWARD SYRIA

1. SUMMARY. PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY SENIOR ISRAELI LEADERS OVER PAST TWO DAYS JUST PRIOR TO YOM KIPPUR CONVEY MARKED CHANGE IN TONE TOWARD SYRIA AND ARE GENERALLY " UPBEAT" RE NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN CONTEXT OF REASSURING ISRAELI PUBLIC IDF PREPARED FOR ANY EVENTUALITY. STATEMENTS APPEAR TO REFLECT OFFICIAL DECISION TO ATTEMPT TO REDUCE DEGREE OF PUBLIC APPREHENSION OVER NORTHERN SECTOR AND MAY BE SIGNAL THAT GOI DESIRES TO MINIMIZE CHANCES FOR MISCALCULATION ON GOLAN FRONT. WHATEVER RATIONALE, REMARKS BY DEFMIN PERES AND COS GUR IN PARTICULAR MARK WELCOME CHANGE FROM STRIDENT MILITANCY OF PAST COUPLE MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

2. DEFMIN PERES, WHOSE REMARKS IN RECENT PAST HAVE BEEN HARDEST HITTING OF ALL, MADE FAIRLY MUTED REFERENCES TO SYRIA DURING TWO APPEARANCES SEPT 24 IN SETTINGS WHICH ON RECENT  
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 05473 251440Z

PASST PERFORMANCE, MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO ELICIT MORE

AGGRESSIVE STATEMENTS. SPEAKING TO MEMBERS OF IDF STATIONED ON GOLAN HEIGHTS, PERES " ADVISED" SYRIANS AGAINST BELIEVING THAT ISRAEL DOES NOT WANT AGREEMENT" WHEN IN FACT WE ARE READY TO MAKE PEACE." HE ADDED " FROM THIS SITE, NOT FAR FROM THE BORDER, I WANT TO WARN THE SYRIANS AGAINST MAKING MISTAKES AND TO TELL THEM THAT WE HAVE NO HATRED FOR THEM. IF THEY WANT TO TALK, THEY'LL FIND US READY." LATER IN DAY AT MEMORIAL SERVICE AT PARATROOPERS MONUMENT NEAR REHOVOT, PERES SAID " THREATS WILL NOT WEAKEN OUR OBJECT OF REACHING PEACE WITH OUR NEIGHBORS...ARAB AGGRESSION WILL NOT AROUSE AGGRESSION ON ISRAEL'S PART."

3. IN WIDE-RANGING INTERVIEW PUBLISHED SEPT 23 IN IDF PERIODICAL " BAMAHAANE," COS GUR WAS ASKED IF IT WERE TRUE THAT SYRIANS ARE CONSISTENTLY VIOLATING DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS. GUR'S RESPONSE, IN PART, WAS AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE THERE ARE INDEED VIOLATIONS. HOWEVER, THESE VIOLATIONS DO NOT ALWAYS SEEM AS SERIOUS TO THEM AS THEY DO TO US BECAUSE, AS WITH ALL AGREEMENTS, THERE ARE VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS...I WOULD BE VERY CAUTIOUS IN PASSING JUDGMENT ON THIS. ONE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT BOTH SIDES ARE LIVING ALONG THE FRONTIER, BOTH ARE ACTIVE... WITHOUT BELITTLING THE SYRIAN VIOLATIONS (AND WE ARE LODGING COMPLAINTS WITH REGARD TO ALL OF THEM), I DO NOT THINK ONE SHOULD EXAGGERATE THEIR SERIOUSNESS IN TERMS OF A CONTINUED SYRIAN DESIRE TO WORSEN THE SITUATION AND BRING IT CLOSER TO WAR. ONE MUST TRY TO ASSESS THESE VIOLATIONS MORE OBJECTIVELY AND MORE CALMLY...WE, AS THE IDF, ARE CLOSELY WATCHING EVERY VIOLATION, IN ORDER TO PLACE IT IN ITS PROPER PROPORTION INSTEAD OF JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS WHICH MIGHT BE UNREASONABLE IN ONE DIRECTION OR ANOTHER. END QUOTE.

4. PM RABIN, IN LONG INTERVIEW IN DEPT 25 MAARIV, ANSWERED AS FOLLOWS IN PARTIAL RESPONSE TO QUESTION CONCERNING FUTURE OF NEGOTIATIONS: " WHILE THERE IS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE EFFORT TO REACH SETTLEMENTS WITH EGYPT AND JORDAN, I BELIEVE THERE IS ALSO ROOM AND MANEUVERING SPACE FOR SETTLEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL."

5. COMMENT: THESE PUBLIC STATEMENTS ARE NOTEWORTHY FOR THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS SYRIA (A FAR CRY FROM GUR'S UNHAPPY  
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PAGE 03 TEL AV 05473 251440Z

REFERENCE TO POSSIBLE ISRAELI " PREEMPTION" OF SOME WEEKS AGO), AS WELL AS FOR GENERALLY " UPBEAT" APPROACH TO SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS IN GENERAL. ( WE NOTE TODAY PRESS COMMENTATORS HAVE ECHOED THIS APPROACH.) WHILE EMPHASIZING IDF IS READY, REMARKS ARE FREE OF STRIDENT QUALITY WHICH UNFORTUNATELY CHARACTERIZED REMARKS OF THESE SAME LEADERS IN RECENT PAST.

6. WE ASSUME A MAJOR REASON FOR THIS CHANGE IS RELATED

TO REASSURANCES RABIN RECEIVED IN WASHINGTON RE ISRAEL'S SECURITY CONCERNS. ALSO, LEADERS (ESPECIALLY PERES AND GUR), HAVING ESTABLISHED THEIR " CREDENTIALS" WITH EARLIER HARD-LINE STATEMENTS DURING SUMMER, NOW MAY FEEL SECURE ENOUGH IN THEIR POSITIONS TO ADOPT MORE CONCILIATORY POSTURE TOWARD TRADITIONAL ENEMY IN NORTH. FINALLY, GOI MAY HAVE DECIDED (PERHAPS AS RESULT OF RABIN VISIT) THAT, SHOULD SITUATION DETERIORATE ON GOLAN FRONT FOR WHATEVER REASON, ISRAEL WOULD BE IN BETTER DIPLOMATIC POSITION WITHOUT CONTINUAL STREAM OF PUBLIC, PROVOCATIVE STATEMENTS.

7. IN ANY EVENT, GOI PUBLIC POSTURE CAN ONLY HELP REASSURE ANXIOUS PUBLIC ON EVE OF YOM KIPPUR THAT GOI IS INTERESTED IN PUSHING PEACE OPTION AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. HOPEFULLY, THIS WILL TURN OUT TO BE CONSISTENT GOI PUBLIC POSTURE IN COMING WEEKS AS WE PREPARE FOR VISIT OF SECRETARY TO MID EAST.  
VELIOTES

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## Message Attributes

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